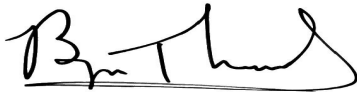


**RICHMOND POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER**

NOTE: This directive is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. It should not be constructed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violation of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

Chapter 7	Number 26	Effective Date 08/03/10	Review Date 2013
Subject ARSON/FIRE INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES			☐ New Order ☒ Replaces G.O. 7-26, 09/11/06)
References CALEA 42.1.1, 42.2.8d VA Code 27-34 through 27-34.2:1 General Order 6-2, Incident-Based Reporting (IBR)			
 _____ Chief of Police or Designee		08/03/10 _____ Date	

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to establish the guidelines for arson/fire investigations procedures *as well as* the duties and responsibilities for Department members.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Police Department to team with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (***Fire Department***) in arson/fire investigations.

III. ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

All employees are expected to fully comply with the guideline and timelines set forth in this general order. Failure to comply will result in appropriate corrective action. Responsibility rests with the Division Commander to ensure that any violations of policy are investigated and appropriate training, counseling and/or disciplinary action is initiated.

IV. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions are added for clarification:

- A. **ARSON** – To unlawfully and intentionally damage or attempt to damage any real or personal property by fire or an incendiary device.
- B. **FIRE OF A SUSPICIOUS NATURE** - Department guidelines mandate that fires of suspicious origins be reported on the IBR as offense type **9841 = *Fire Investigation***.

IV. PROCEDURE**A. *Fire Investigation Team:***

1. The ***Fire Investigation Team*** is a multi-departmental squad composed of detectives from the Police Department's ***Arson Squad*** and fire investigators from ***the Fire Department's Fire Investigations Unit***. The Police Department's Major Crimes Team Sergeant, in conjunction with the Fire Department's ***Fire Investigations Unit*** Captain, shall ***serve*** as liaisons for the Police Department.
2. The work schedules of personnel assigned to the Fire Investigation Team are arranged so that a team member, either police or fire, will be ***available*** 24 hours per day. In instances when no member of the team is on-duty, a member of the team shall be on stand-by duty and should be contacted through the Department of Emergency Communications' (DEC) Fire Console for call-out.
3. The members assigned to the Fire Investigation Team shall:
 - a) Respond to and investigate all required fire-related incidents;
 - b) Compile an IBR Report after it is established that a crime has been committed;
 - c) Respond with the Fire Department on all "upgraded" fire calls and the 2nd or greater alarms of fire for the purpose of investigating the incident;
 - d) Investigate fire-related injuries and fire deaths;
 - e) File all the necessary required reports or paperwork with both Police and Fire Department supervisors;
 - f) Follow-up on all assigned IBRs and reports; and,
 - g) Cover all required shifts, either on-duty or stand-by basis.
4. A ***Fire Investigation Team member*** will respond to the scene of the following:
 - a) Fire-related injuries and fire deaths;
 - b) All suspicious fires;
 - c) All incidents where a fire or police ***supervisor has requested Fire Investigation Team response***;
 - d) Any explosion or bomb threats where evidence of a suspicious package has been found. When a bomb threat occurs, it is not necessary for the DEC to specifically contact a member of the Fire Investigation Team. Any available police detective may respond to a bomb threat. If a suspicious package or a bomb is detected, the responding detective/investigator must be a member of the Fire Investigation Team; and,

- e) All calls for assistance from the Metropolitan Arson Task Force as assigned through the supervisors of the unit.

NOTE: The Bomb Team shall forward a copy of any report relative to the investigation to the Fire Investigation Team including both the Police Major Crimes Team Sergeant and the Fire Investigations Unit Captain.

B. Reports of Arson or Fires of a Suspicious Nature:

1. ***Fire Investigation Team members*** assigned the fire *investigation* shall:
 - a) Complete an IBR, ***PISTOL Case Management supplements*** and ***any required Fire Department reports*** on arson ***and suspicious*** fires. For purposes of IBR Reports involving crimes of arson, the fire investigator shall serve as both the responding officer and the investigating officer, and follow the procedures as outlined in General Order 6-2, Incident-Based Reporting (IBR);
 - b) If the situation dictates, may request a patrol officer to complete the IBR;
 - c) Have DEC contact any police supervisor on-duty to review and ***approve*** the IBR Report as soon as practical.
2. The ***Fire Investigation Team member*** assigned to the fire shall ***complete the initial PISTOL Case Management supplement within ten days of case assignment*** containing all relevant information ***and update Case Management*** as to the progress of the investigation.

C. Contacting an Arson/Fire Investigator:

If the services of an investigator are needed, DEC shall be contacted to request that ***an on-duty Fire Investigation Team member or on-call Team member is notified.***

D. General Procedures:

1. The patrol officer shall assist at the scene in the regulation of traffic control, crowd control, entry-log maintenance or in any other manner. The officer may be requested to complete the IBR, as directed by the Fire Investigation Team member or police supervisory personnel.
2. All fires must be reported to DEC, regardless of the date of the occurrence. DEC will send a fire unit to take a report.

E. Duties of the Police Supervisor of the Fire Investigation Team:

1. It will be the responsibility of the police supervisor of the Fire Investigation Team from the Major Crimes Division to review all arson ***and/or*** fire reports of a suspicious nature.

2. The police supervisor will work closely with the Deputy Fire Marshall of Investigations to ensure fair and equitable allocation of duties and responsibilities to the Fire Team members.

V. FORMS

IBR and any supplemental forms